

SNC Reference Number (enter if previously assigned)
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4. PROJECT SUMMARY

County: Mariposa

Applicant: Mariposa County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Project Title: Mariposa School Forest Project

PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this project is to provide sufficient factual data about the project site and to do all the initial work to facilitate a community collaborative process leading to a Mariposa County Specific Plan. This specific application would result in a large conservation easement with public access, trails for public use, a school forest to provide students with hands-on conservation education, and a clustered development of homes on an appropriate portion of the land.

PROJECT SCOPE

Bordering the eastern side of the historic town of Mariposa in the central Sierra foothills is an undeveloped tract of more than 2,000 acres. The land-use classification for this tract of land under Mariposa County's general plan is residential, a designation that, with impending zoning ordinance revisions, could allow development of parcels as small as five acres. This expanse of land, mostly forested, embraces the Stockton Creek watershed and the Mariposa Reservoir, the town's water supply. Growth projections for Mariposa County and current development pressures suggest the eventuality of full build out of this property, an outcome that could have adverse environmental consequences, particularly potential impacts on water resources. The site begs for this sustainable-management model that would offer multiple ecological and economic benefits to the community, including:

- Protection and enhancement of water quality and quantity in the town's primary watershed;
- A sizable, biologically diverse mixed woodland and chaparral complex that would be under a conservation easement and managed using the principles and practices of sustainable forestry to manage use and protect water quality, to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, to sequester carbon, to reduce the risk of fire, and to provide jobs and income for local residents;
- A clustered residential community, isolated from the bulk of the watershed by physical barriers and best management practices to prevent nonpoint source pollution, that would be a showcase of sustainable design and construction technologies;
- Hands-on educational and vocational training opportunities for local schools, students from other communities participating in onsite learning/training programs, and higher-education students at nearby institutions;

- Low-impact recreational opportunities for residents and visitors including hiking and birding;
- Protection, perpetuation, and enhancement of Mariposa County's rural and cultural character while benefiting the local economy.

The work segments will be a planning segment to identify the areas most suited for human habitation. These areas will be surveyed by a biologist and an archeologist to determine if there are areas within this area in which there should be no development. This map will include a proposed circulation pattern which will also be surveyed.

The Stockton Creek watershed above the reservoir specifically and the entire property in general would be assessed by a hydro geologist to review previous reports, maps, and records and prepare a technical report to include an approximate water budget for the property and ground water conditions and water quality.

All the initial work in the community and the selection of a facilitator will be completed in the creation of the collaborative process intended to accompany the County planning process.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Randy Panietz – Superintendent, Mariposa County Unified School District

Mark Rowney – General Manager, Mariposa Public Utility District

Gerald D. Fischer – CEO Yosemite Management Group, LLC

SCHOOL FOREST PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Planning	February 2, 2009
Hydrogeologist survey	March 1, 2009
Community Collaboration Design	March 1, 2009
Archeological Survey	May 1, 2009
Biological Survey	April 1, 2009
First Review SNC	August 2, 2009
Project Completion	Dec 31, 2009

SCHOOL FOREST PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Hydro geologist study and report	\$ 8,000
Biological survey and report	\$ 3,750
Archeological survey and report	\$ 3,250
Planning	\$ 23,500
Staff and Project performance measures	\$ 2,500
Collaborative process and design	\$ 9,000
SNC GRANT TOTAL	\$ 50,000

5. Evaluation Criteria

(a.) Project Quality and Readiness

The project called “The School Forest” will accomplish a whole list of valuable community goals. It will preserve the integrity of the watershed in a permanent conservation easement. It will provide land and a conceptual framework for a conservation/education program to serve our local schools. This program would create and manage a sustainable forest on all suitable soils and slope exposures that human effort can accomplish on the project land. It will create a brush management program to explore the potential of cut brush as a fuel raw material for the creation of pellets that would be marketed locally.

The scientific facts uncovered in the education program will be reviewed in the context of programs, goals and values to determine future direction. For example brush harvesting would be evaluated in the context of the bird population with the goal of managing in such a way as to promote a sustained or increased bird population that utilizes the brush habitat.

Public access would be along Slaughterhouse Road and a system of existing dirt roads for riding and walking trail systems. A sponsored bird count could be used to help establish base line populations thus helping to integrate the public with the school program.

Tourists and locals could enjoy a sierra foothill environment within walking distance of a gold rush era historic village. This 2000+ acre tract of undeveloped land adjacent to Mariposa is a singular opportunity in the Sierra range.

The human community within the conservation easement is envisioned with a state of the art sustainable design for homes and to the degree considered